



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff **Scott Smith** Chief Deputy

Law of the Month

June 2017

Summer is here! Well, almost and with the nicer weather and kids being off school, many families will be spending more time in the beautiful outdoors that Wisconsin has to offer. For some, that means spending time riding their ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle) or UTV (Utility Terrain Vehicle). These vehicles can be great fun and allow access to areas many people would not be able to see without them.

As fun as they are, inexperienced riders often fail to realize that ATVs and UTVs don't allow for the same safety features that a motor vehicle does. Things like airbags, seatbelts and even doors and windows which work well to protect occupants of a vehicle in a crash are not present when a driver of an ATV or UTV makes a mistake and it leads to a crash or rollover.

Every year we hear stories in the news about people, often children, being seriously injured or killed in tragic accidents involving ATVs or UTVs. Even more disturbing is when it also involves the use of drugs or alcohol. Just as while operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal and dangerous, so is the operation of an ATV or UTV.

Wisconsin State Statutes 23.33(4c)(a)1 states: "No person may operate an all-terrain vehicle or utility terrain vehicle while under the influence of an intoxicant to a degree which renders him or her incapable of safe operation of an all-terrain vehicle or utility terrain vehicle." There are also subsections that apply to one's blood alcohol level as well as having any restricted controlled substances (illegal drugs) in your system. The fines for this offense start in the area of \$450 and go up depending on if a minor passenger is involved or someone is injured. The public can be arrested for this offense even on private property unless the land is owned by them or an immediate family member.

Captain Scott Mittelstadt of the Dodge County Sheriff's Office wishes for everyone to have a safe, enjoyable summer outdoors and not mix drugs or alcohol with the driving of ATVs, UTVs or any vehicle.